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President: Mr. Lajčák ..... (Slovakia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 110 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/72/1)

The President: Members will recall that the Secretary-General presented his annual report (A/72/1) to the General Assembly at its 3rd plenary meeting on 19 September 2017.

Mr. Mnatsakanyan (Armenia): Once again, Mr. President, Armenia congratulates you on your election and assures you of its full support.

The Secretary-General's first report (A/72/1) since his election to lead our Organization reflects the considerable complexity of addressing the many objectives of our collective global agenda. We commend the Secretary-General for his strong focus on the major challenges before us and for the action he has taken in a short period of time. Above all, the report is a manifestation of a commitment to multilateralism as an effective instrument for addressing the mix of challenges. It is a refreshing reminder that it is not possible for individual States in isolation to address our global challenges, from climate change to population growth, from displacement and migration to inequality and exclusion, and from national institutions to global terrorism and threats to peace and security. Multilateralism is not optional, and we agree on that.

The United Nations will have to recalibrate itself to address the current global agenda. Without reform, it will be doomed to ad hoc reactions, inertia and reduced effectiveness. If we share a common and strong commitment to multilateralism, we simply cannot avoid reform. Armenia therefore reiterates its full support to the Secretary-General's reform agenda. We understand that it is a work in progress, and we also accept that while the Secretary-General enjoys a mandate from the membership to ensure that the United Nations system's capacity is strong and action-oriented, it is he who is responsible for taking action to adapt the system.

We greatly appreciate the Secretary-General's full engagement with Member States in sharing and testing his concept of reform. The past few months have demonstrated the Secretariat's serious intellectual and analytical engagement and the leadership of the Secretary-General in introducing a holistic reform agenda with three fundamental constituent parts — reform of the United Nations development system, management reform and reform of the peace and security architecture. We are looking forward to the next phases of the reform agenda's implementation.

Armenia particularly welcomes the Secretary-General's doctrine whereby prevention is placed at the heart of United Nations action. We have consistently promoted that concept, with particular emphasis on early prevention and action. We therefore welcome a holistic approach to prevention in all its complexity. If early prevention is accepted as the most effective method of interrupting deteriorating situations, a rights-based approach should carry particular weight.

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While the report rightly emphasizes the complementary nature of prevention and sustainable and inclusive development and recognizes the 2030 Agenda as the primary architecture for that, the reinforced emphasis on promoting and protecting all human rights, strengthening national institutions to that end and reinforcing international cooperation to promote the human rights agenda is still significant. We welcome the report's recognition of that premise. As it stresses, peace is indeed a human rights imperative.

Only strong States are capable of delivering effectively on this agenda in order to secure early prevention. Strong States are inclusive States, in which a strong civil society, an open media and a vibrant private sector all participate in advancing the national agenda. Early prevention depends on detecting, recognizing and acting on deteriorating human rights situations, and it remains the primary responsibility of States. That responsibility should be driven by a deep recognition of the risks of permitting the social fabric to be undermined, exposing vulnerable groups to serious human rights violations and amplifying the likelihood of atrocities.

The irresponsibility of inflammatory hate speech, intolerance, xenophobia, racial and ethnic profiling and the glorification of hate crimes, especially when such behaviour is led and encouraged by a State's political leaders, should be of concern to the entire international community and serve as a clear early-warning sign of potential conflict and atrocity crimes. The United Nations has the capacity to detect such early-warning signs and address them.

For its part, Armenia will continue working to help consolidate international efforts to prevent genocide. The year 2018 marks the seventieth anniversary of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. While about one third of United Nations Member States have still not acceded to or ratified the Convention, Armenia proposes to use the occasion of its seventieth anniversary to launch a resolute United Nations-wide campaign for raising awareness of the Convention and the need for its universalization. The International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime, which we mark on 9 December, will be a fitting occasion for setting that campaign in motion.

While we emphasize the primary role of States in advancing the prevention agenda, in restating our commitment to multilateralism, we recognize the significant potential of international cooperation, backed by sufficient financing, to achieve collective good at the regional and international levels. The Secretary-General's stated objective of making the United Nations a better partner for Member States in their efforts to meet their responsibilities, and the fact that he has placed it at the heart of his reform agenda, is highly commendable.

In Armenia, we are gradually reaping the benefits of working with the United Nations and its country team in advancing our national development agenda, making full use of the 2030 Agenda as an international policy framework. Together with the United Nations Development Programme, we have been setting up a national platform to support accelerated implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, promote public-sector innovation and leverage private capital through impact investment. Armenia emphasizes the strong effects of innovation, creative education and inclusive and collaborative joint action by the Government, civil society and the private sector in advancing smart development.

Although middle-income countries will continue to require the attention of international financial institutions and the United Nations development system, regional and international partnerships remain as important as ever. As a landlocked developing country, Armenia particularly emphasizes the importance of accessible and unimpeded transport and transit corridors, and deplores unilateral coercive measures and the imposition of blockades and closed borders that worsen existing infrastructure deficits. We are looking forward to presenting our first voluntary national review at the meeting of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development to be held under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council in 2018, and are happy to share our experience with our partners.

With regard to its peace and security pillar, the Organization continues to face the considerable and multifaceted challenges of unresolved conflicts, global terrorism and other vulnerable situations. Displacement and migration remain an important focus of our collective agenda, including from the peace and security angle. In the past four years alone, Armenia has become a host to more than 22,000 displaced people from the Middle

East. We welcome the Secretary-General's concept of building anticipatory relationships with national and regional partners in order to prevent conflict, as well as addressing the root causes of conflict across the three pillars of peace and security, human rights and inclusive development. The evolving proposal for recalibrating the peacebuilding function of the United Nations within the peace and security architecture deserves close attention. Once again, we commend the focus on prevention in supporting an integrated, strategic and coherent approach to sustaining peace.

We also underline the importance of strong collaboration with regional settings, platforms and formats for sustaining peace and resolving conflicts and preventing duplication of effort, which has the effect of blurring the focus on sustainable, peacefully negotiated and compromise-based solutions, encouraging forum-shopping and undermining the efforts of parties in internationally mandated formats. In that respect, we are very grateful to the Secretary-General for his continued commitment and unequivocal support to the co-Chairs of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in their efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

The Secretary-General concludes his report with the significant observation that the onus is on the United Nations to prove its worth. It is a call to heed the contradictory and complex challenges of our current agenda and to recall the foundations of the United Nations as it was born out of the destruction and calamity of the twentieth century's two devastating world wars. It is an invitation to reflect on our collective conscience, as the United Nations does not consist only of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat. As of today, it is constituted by 193 sovereign States sharing responsibility for the peoples in whose name, after all, the Charter of the United Nations was written.

Mrs. Rodríguez Abascal (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank you, Mr. President, for presenting the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/72/1) and would like to express our appreciation for the work you have done in this first month of your mandate.

The United Nations is becoming more and more relevant to the people of the world every day. Our multilateral institution represents the hope of millions for a better world, where peace, goodwill and the yearning for a better world prevail over war, threats and fear of the disappearance of the human species. That is where we see the Organization's relevance and where the importance of multilateralism is affirmed once again. As the Secretary-General rightly says, multilateral action is more necessary than ever if we want to find effective solutions to today's converging challenges.

Although we have major commitments that provide a road map for achieving sustainable development, such as the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, there are continuing challenges to their implementation at both the national and international levels. According to data from the Food and Agriculture Organization, about 108 million people globally suffered from severe food insecurity in 2016, a drastic increase compared to the figure of 80 million in 2015. In addition, some 700 million people continue to live in extremely difficult conditions. The impact of climate change as reflected in recurring natural disasters, as well as in the virtual destruction of infrastructure in many developing countries, has led to the loss of many lives. We are concerned about the fact that developing countries lack the new, additional and predictable financial resources and the infrastructure and technology they need in order to implement these agendas at the national level.

The Cuban people have much to be proud of in terms of our achievements over the past six decades. To cite just a few examples, we were the first country to end illiteracy in Latin America. The World Health Organization recently certified Cuba as the first country on Earth to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS and syphilis, and UNICEF has declared Cuba free of child malnutrition. All of this is the result of the high quality of our renowned free health and education systems, whose main concern is the right to life and the well-being of the Cuban people. Our revolution is of the people, by the people and for the people.

We are proud to belong to a zone of peace, as announced at the second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Havana in January 2014. Cuba emphasizes that the rules of coexistence, based on friendship, cooperation and respect, without interference in the internal affairs of other nations, are essential in international relations among States.

We reiterate that the best way to prevent conflict is to eradicate its root causes. In that regard, Cuba urges the international community to redouble its efforts to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including inequality, hunger and social exclusion. We affirm that unwavering respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law must continue to be a basic pillar of international security. That means ensuring full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, refraining from the use or threat of use of force in international relations and from interference in the internal affairs of States, as well as working to settle international disputes by peaceful means.

If we want to change the current unjust and profoundly unequal international order, we must stop applying unilateral coercive measures aimed at developing countries and put an end to colonialism and foreign occupation. We reaffirm that respect for political, economic, social and cultural systems that nations have freely chosen for themselves promotes not only sustainable development but also the maintenance of international peace and security. Cuba firmly denounces and rejects the unjust economic, trade and financial embargo that the United States of America has imposed on it for more than 50 years. Backed by more than 11 million Cubans and with the support of the international community, we call once again for the lifting of this cruel blockade, which is a violation of international law and of the human rights of all Cubans, whom it has deprived of their full enjoyment of the right to development.

We have taken note of the efforts of the Secretary-General aimed at reforming the Organization. In order for the United Nations to be more democratic and effective, the General Assembly should be revitalized and strengthened and able to fully exercise the powers conferred on it by the Charter, without interference from the Security Council in its work or its entities. Reforming the Security Council with a view to making it more democratic and representative requires changing its composition and working methods, and we must not postpone that any longer.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize to you, Mr. President, and to the Secretary-General, Cuba's commitment to multilateralism and to safeguarding a prosperous and peaceful world for present and future generations.

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Colombia is grateful for the report of the Secretary-General (A/72/1), which lays out a valuable road map for the reforms that he has proposed and takes us on a geopolitical and strategic journey through the true role of multilateralism, led by the United Nations, at one of the most critical times that the world has seen since our Organization was founded, 72 years ago. The notion that we need a more analytical document rather than a summary of activities has been apparent for many years. We firmly believe that in October 2018, a year from now, when we meet once again in this Hall to analyse what this document has achieved, we will not just be describing the past and sometimes repeating sterile diagnoses but seeing the results of an ambitious and inclusive process of change, which Colombia fully supports.

A stronger, more effective multilateralism will enable the United Nations to achieve ambitious goals in the areas of peace, development and human rights. I can say with certainty that we have specific examples that have shown that it is possible to approach this task with optimism, despite the difficulties. Various Member States are seeing a greater good reflected in the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Forum on Financing for Development and the Paris Climate Change Agreement, and are now signing up to the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the Ocean Conference's voluntary commitments. That is cause for optimism. We are seeing evidence that when there is a high level of involvement and political will on the part of States and when they consistently and persistently work towards a win-win situation in our Organization, it is possible to establish an architecture that benefits humankind. Once again, I want to emphasize the indisputable relevance of the United Nations for addressing today's challenges.

Right now, if we are to achieve that win-win scenario in the area of international peace and security, we must be bold, as is evidenced in the report of the Secretary-General and in his vision for the future. As the Secretary-General says and has reiterated in recent months, in its approach to attaining sustainable peace the Organization should focus its efforts on prevention and on reacting more quickly in order to get results that can have the real impact that we all seek on the ground. As the report says, we must make our institution agile and able to deliver results.

I would like to mention two things that are particularly important to my delegation. The initiative for achieving gender parity at the senior management level by 2021, clearly outlined by the Secretary-General, brings us closer to a goal that has eluded us for decades. Through that proposal, we now believe it is possible. We should also give due recognition to the cross-cutting nature of the gender perspective in areas such as sustainable peace. In the case of my country and its journey towards peace, the United Nations has played a major role in it through the first special political mission of the Security Council to Colombia, which is ending this week, giving way to a new phase through a second, verification mission. In addition to that is all of the support we have been shown, which in the next few hours will culminate in a bilateral ceasefire with the National Liberation Army, a proof of the commitment to accompanying us on that journey.

That is why we can say, based on the lessons we have learned, that the proposal for a structural transformation of the Secretariat is essential and will lead to results that will literally be seen on the ground on a daily basis, aimed at achieving the principal goal of the United Nations, which is helping the men, women and children in every part of the world afflicted by conflict or war. We are of the firm belief that we can do this through peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations and special political missions that address our pressing political, military and humanitarian challenges. A dysfunctional bureaucracy should no longer be an obstacle. In order to achieve those goals and overcome the other challenges that the Secretary-General in his report, it will not be enough simply to make those proposals. A firm political commitment from all of us, the Member States, is crucial. The ground has already been prepared with important contributions. The time for diagnoses is over. We must move on to action, without delay, because that could mean the difference between life or death and peace or war.

Mr. Gafoor (Singapore): At the outset, I would like to express our appreciation to Secretary-General António Guterres for his report on the work of the Organization (A/72/1), which we note is his first since assuming office.

My delegation welcomes the report, which not only provides a sobering reminder of the multiple challenges facing the United Nations but also highlights the important role of the United Nations in addressing them. There are many crises yet to be resolved, but the world would be worse off if it were not for the work of the United Nations. As we heard from many leaders over the past week during the general debate, today we need the United Nations more than ever. A universal, rule-based multilateral system is essential if we are to solve the complex problems confronting the world. No nation can deal with transboundary problems alone. The United Nations has a critical role to play as a platform for cooperation based on the principles of mutual respect, mutual benefit and international law.

My delegation is of the view that the figures and diagrams are a welcome addition to this year's report. They are very useful and contribute significantly to highlighting the progress achieved over the past year. For example, the improvement in the percentage of women who are heads or deputy heads of missions is clearly depicted in figure IX, along with the significant distance still to go before gender parity is achieved. We also greatly appreciate the summary of the Secretary-General's key initiatives in 2017 that appears right after the introduction in the report. This list clearly demonstrates that Secretary-General Guterres has set about tackling our multiple challenges head-on immediately after taking office, taking steps to make the United Nations fit for purpose and outlining a clear vision for how the United Nations can do better. We look forward to further updates on initiatives introduced in 2017. We would now like to make three points pertaining to the report.

First, we support the Secretary-General's commitment to reforming the United Nations in order to make it more effective, nimble and accountable, with a view to improving its delivery of its mandate and making a real impact on people on the ground. We particularly welcome his drive to make the United Nations more transparent and accountable to the membership. We share his view that the Organization must become more transparent and able to demonstrate a clear link between resources and results much more visibly and meaningfully. In that regard, we see the Secretary-General's annual report as an important mechanism for transparency and accountability. We would therefore like to see it further improved to focus on results, and specifically on what the United Nations is doing to make a difference to people on the ground. It would help if the report also included an annex with a one-page outline of some of the key statistics and figures showing how the United Nations had made a positive

impact globally over the past year that could then be used to profile the work of the Organization positively.

Secondly, just as the report begins with a snapshot of the Secretary-General's main initiatives, we would suggest that it conclude with a concise list of his priorities and objectives for the upcoming year. Of course, we understand that those may change during the year with the vagaries of international crises and developments. However, a list of priorities would enable Member States to better understand the key platforms in the Secretary-General's agenda for the year and, more importantly, objectively assess progress on them throughout the year. For example, we welcome the Secretary-General's commitment to achieving gender parity at the senior leadership level by 2021, which is listed as one of his main initiatives for 2017. A commitment that explicit not only communicates the Secretary-General's priorities and goals in a clear and measurable way, it also reflects a willingness on his part to be accountable to Member States for his actions and priorities and for achieving what he wishes to achieve. It shows that he is willing to lead from the top in transforming the Organization so that it is more focused on delivery and results than on mere process.

Thirdly and lastly, it is evident throughout the report that the United Nations and the Secretary-General attach great importance to effective partnerships between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, which often have a valuable understanding of the particular contexts and circumstances of individual regions. In South-East Asia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) plays a critical role in securing regional peace and fostering regional economic integration. We are pleased that the United Nations concluded a new plan of action with ASEAN in 2016. The partnership must be strengthened, and we look forward to the Secretary-General's visit to Manila in November for the upcoming ASEAN Summit.

For its part, as the incoming ASEAN Chair for 2018, Singapore looks forward to working with the United Nations and the Secretary-General to explore new ways to enhance the partnership with ASEAN. In that regard, it is our hope that next year the Secretary-General's annual report will devote greater attention to the issues and highlight the partnerships that the United Nations has with various regional organizations throughout the world. Ultimately, it is important that the Secretary-General and the United Nations lay out a clear plan and pathway for building partnerships with regional and subregional organizations around the world with a view to addressing the key global challenges of our time.

In conclusion, Singapore strongly supports the work of the United Nations, which has made a significant difference to the lives of people around the world. We need to safeguard and strengthen our multilateral rule-based system so that even the smallest country can survive and thrive as an independent, sovereign nation. In that regard, the work of the United Nations, particularly the work of the Secretary-General, is absolutely critical. Singapore reiterates its support for the Secretary-General, and we look forward to continuing to work constructively with him so that as the United Nations we can collectively build a better future for all our people.

Mr. Rybakov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): We have read the report of the Secretary-General (A/72/1) on the work of the Organization with interest.

The United Nations is clearly faced with the difficult choice of staying within its customary limits and conducting business as usual or of moving forward, while listening to the voice of each individual State and taking account of their specific needs. In that context we support the Secretary-General's view on the crucial importance of revitalizing the commitment to the principle of multilateralism, which enables States to combine their resources so as to overcome the challenges and threats of today. Belarus has frequently noted that many conflict situations could be avoided if the United Nations were truly committed to a spirit of unity.

Working for political mediation at the early stages of a confrontation is unquestionably an effective part of the ways by which we can maintain international peace and security. In that regard, we agree with the Secretary-General's approach in terms of its focus on preventive action aimed at avoiding conflicts. Peacebuilding should not be perceived as solely intended for post-conflict situations. At the same time, we understand that new times bring new challenges and threats. In that regard, we believe the initiative of the President of the Republic of Belarus in launching a new Helsinki process is timely and has the potential to become a platform for dialogue aimed at overcoming differences among States all over the world.

Naturally, in summing up the past year, we have noted the Secretary-General's active efforts aimed at

reorganizing the United Nations. While in that regard we have confidence in the Secretary-General as an experienced international official, we do not believe that reform should be carried out without the broadest possible participation of Member States. Consultations must include all States, not just donor countries, because we firmly believe that new methods of work in the United Nations are especially important to States receiving assistance. It is only through joint efforts that we will be able to realize our goals most effectively and in a manner acceptable to all.

In any restructuring of the Organization, we should be careful not to eliminate positive aspects of the system that have been shown to be effective in practice. We also believe it is extremely important to avoid saddling Member States with additional financial and bureaucratic burdens, and to ensure that United Nations agencies are well coordinated and run smoothly on the ground, while fully respecting the principle that United Nations activities should respond to the national priorities of Member States.

We welcome the Secretary-General's efforts to revitalize the Secretariat's peace and security architecture. Initiatives aimed at increasing the potential of United Nations peacekeeping forces and adapting their configurations as well as possible to current circumstances deserve broad support. In the context of improving peacekeeping, however, it is important to ensure that the process of technical reform does not become an end in itself, that we do not get bogged down in bureaucratic rearrangements and that we avoid arbitrarily expanding or shrinking the mandates and functions of the key United Nations bodies. Our joint and, most importantly, coordinated efforts should result in maintaining peace and security in vulnerable regions.

Where United Nations peacekeeping missions are concerned, the gender perspective plays an important role in improving the current peace and security architecture. In that regard, the Secretary-General's initiative to enhance the role of women in peacekeeping deserves the high praise. The Republic of Belarus is no stranger to that concept. The Belarusian military experts deployed to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and successfully carrying out their tasks there include women.

We concur with the Secretary-General that, although progress on development indicators is being made, there remain threats that could undermine global stability. That is a very immediate problem, and we believe that the United Nations should therefore take a more individual approach to solving specific problems, taking into account the unique characteristics and peculiarities of every country.

In our view, it is high time that the United Nations recognized the middle-income countries, which have still not been factored into the systemic activity of our Organization and for which there is still no coordinated assistance mechanism. We are talking about more than 100 countries, which are home to a majority of the world's population. They account for a third of the world's gross domestic product and a quarter of its exports and imports. Moreover, 73 per cent of all the people living in poverty are in middle-income countries. We hope that the Secretariat will help by formulating and adopting a strategy to help middle-income countries achieve sustainable development, based on the Sustainable Development Goals and on instruments analogous to those devised for other categories of developing countries. If we do not take the interests of this category of country into account we will never succeed in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We would also like to look at various current processes within the United Nations that have to do with routine interactions between States and the Secretariat. States need a clear and open framework for such interaction if they are to accomplish their tasks successfully. Unfortunately, the bureaucratic red tape in the Secretariat shows no sign of diminishing. We continue to see that the Secretariat is simply not listening to States' requests that it simplify the processes intended to serve them. The unilateral introduction of new rules to do with the technical aspects of the Secretariat often seriously complicates the practical daily work of States at Headquarters and compels them to focus on technical and logistical issues rather than on addressing substantive issues.

The process for organizing events for States at the United Nations remains cumbersome, and for some reason we still have to pay for it. The Secretariat's desire to divest itself of its direct administrative functions has forced Member States to establish a mechanism to improve the interaction between the Secretariat and the Permanent Missions of Member States. The enormous attention paid to this mechanism during the previous session emphasized how increasingly urgent it is that we

rid ourselves of the backlog of these problems, whose resolution frequently depends solely on the Secretariat's willingness to react quickly to constructive criticism and suggestions from the Missions.

We would also like to discuss the format for considering agenda items, specifically item 110, which we are currently considering, on the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization. Today, as in past years, only Member States participate in the debate. For some reason, the Secretary-General presented his report under agenda item 8, which is the general debate. In our view, that is quite wrong. Moreover, agenda item 8 has its own theme, which the President of the General Assembly decides on every year. We believe that the Secretary-General should also adhere strictly to that theme, but he should present his report under the appropriate agenda item. Some here may say that these are details and this is a practice that has evolved over the years, but it is precisely such practices, where things are winked at and there is an unwillingness to follow our own rules, that can lead first to indifference, then to misunderstandings and eventually even to conflicts, which all of us would like to avoid.

We should not forget that, first and foremost, the United Nations is us — the States. We should not speak of it as if it were some artificial organism with a life of its own. Only when we fully identify with the United Nations and feel that it belongs equally to all States, with no exceptions, will we begin to talk and listen to one another, and to agree with one another instead of trading verbiage and blame. Only then will we succeed in ridding ourselves of the criticism that the United Nations is unable to respond adequately to challenges and threats, and make the Organization truly useful and essential for all who need it.

Mr. Matjila (South Africa): I would first like to convey our heartfelt condolences to those affected by the massacre in Las Vegas this past weekend. Our thoughts and prayers go to the families of the victims, and we wish those who were injured a speedy recovery.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his first report on the work of the Organization (A/72/1). It reflects his clear vision and firm determination to enhance multilateralism and strengthen the authority and role of the United Nations. This is indeed an Organization like no other. We agree with the Secretary-General that the world we live in presents a mixed picture of progress, challenges and opportunities. The United Nations has a unique role and responsibility to assist and empower all Member States and regional organizations to achieve the global goals that we have collectively identified and included in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the landmark agreements of 2015 on climate change and sustainable development.

The triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality are not unique to South Africa. They are present across all regions of the world and can be seen even between States. We need to be creative in finding ways to establish a more equal and just socioeconomic world order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. As President Zuma noted during the general debate,

> "The current structure of the global economy continues to deepen the divide between the global North and global South ... Even within the developed countries, the gap between rich and poor remains wide and is of serious concern" (*see A/72/PV.9, p. 15*).

South Africa is committed to working with the United Nations to ensure that our efforts can put the world on a trajectory that will enable us to attain the Sustainable Development Goals, eradicate poverty, combat discrimination and uphold equality for all. "Leaving no one behind" should not become an often-repeated but meaningless phrase, for it is a call to action. In that regard, we note that the implementation phase of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has seen a drop in the means of implementation for supporting developing countries and a decline in financial contributions to the relevant multilateral bodies dealing with development and environmental issues. There has also been a concerted attempt to shift the burden of development assistance away from the commitments made by developed countries. South Africa counts on the leadership and good offices of the Secretary-General to mobilize adequate financial support, and thanks him for his commitment to maintaining a relentless focus on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

South Africa is continuing its commitment to ensuring respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and their promotion, protection and fulfilment. South Africa's commitment to human rights and to the promotion of human dignity and equality is unwavering, and respect for human rights has been the

defining feature of its political history. In his report, the Secretary-General notes that human rights are

> "investments which bring both immediate and long-term benefits in building resilience, redressing grievance, reducing inequality and advancing sustainable development" (*A/72/1, para. 92*).

South Africa emphasizes the importance of the global realization of economic, social and cultural rights and remains committed to helping the Organization to make concrete and tangible progress in that regard, including by drafting a convention, within the human rights family of instruments, on the right to development. That should be the case for all kinds of rights, including the right to self-determination.

South Africa deplores the ongoing denial of the right to self-determination for the peoples of Palestine and Western Sahara, which is a matter of serious concern to the people of South Africa. Those issues have become even more critical, given the current global instability and the increased number of conflicts. We are grappling with a multiplicity of new threats to the maintenance of international peace and security.

South Africa has long been an unwavering advocate for a more deliberate and focused use of United Nations conflict-prevention capacities, including early engagement with parties in disputes that could potentially become violent. In addition, the United Nations should not lose focus once initial stability has been achieved, and should continue to work in support of finding lasting political solutions. Too often we see a relapse into conflict after initial peace processes have been implemented. With that in mind, South Africa fully supports the vision of the Secretary-General to establish, as he says, a culture of prevention within the Organization, including by identifying and addressing the root causes of conflict. That is a process that requires coordination across the three pillars of the United Nations: peace and security, human rights and inclusive development.

South Africa remains convinced that peace and stability in the world will remain elusive if we do not address the nexus between security and development. We look forward to the joint United Nations-World Bank flagship study on how development and political processes interact for the prevention of violence. We support a United Nations that is agile and able to deliver results in complex environments. We look forward to the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General on sustaining peace and holistic approaches to the peace spectrum. Sustainable peace requires not just changes to the structures and mindset of the Organization but also sustainable and predictable financing for all the Organization's mechanisms across the peace spectrum.

We welcome the Secretary-General's prioritization of partnerships with regional organizations, in particular the Framework for a Renewed United Nations-African Union Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda 2017-2027. We welcome the continued support for the efforts of the African Union to resolve conflicts on our contin ¬t through the promotion of African solutions to African problems. South Africa will also look favourably on the proposals for sustainable, predictable and flexible financing for African Union peace-support operations, based on an understanding of the comparative advantage of African Union missions and the added value to the United Nations. We remain concerned that arbitrary cuts to the peacekeeping budget will limit the ability of the Organization to respond to the multitude of global peace and security threats and the ability of our troops to deliver on their mandate.

We welcome the Secretary-General's commitment to a universally desired goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. South Africa is pleased that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has been signed by more than 50 Member States, and we call on all Member States to join the momentum to prohibit all weapons of mass destruction. As President Zuma declared during the general debate, "there are no safe hands for weapons of mass destruction" (*A/72/PV.9, p. 16*).

South Africa believes that the United Nations needs to be effective, efficient, transparent, accountable and people-centred. In that regard, we have welcomed the inclusive and consultative processes led personally by the Secretary-General, such as the establishment of the Office of Counter-Terrorism earlier in the year. Meaningful reform of the Secretariat requires ownership on the part of the entire membership of the Organization. Gender parity and greater geographical balance at all levels of the Secretariat are goals that we should already have achieved after 72 years. We look forward to constructive engagement on the proposals in the relevant committees. However, the reform of the Organization remains incomplete as long as the entire continent of Africa is excluded from its most powerful principal organ.

In conclusion, South Africa shares the view of the Secretary-General that

> "Multilateralism is not optional. It is the most effective vehicle, whether regional or global, for achieving the goals of peace, inclusive sustainable development and human rights for all." (*A/72/1, para. 14*)

We wish to thank the Secretary-General and the Secretariat for their services to the Organization, and look forward to working with the Secretary-General and all Member States to build a stronger, more effective and equitable United Nations that will deliver for all the peoples of the world.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to express my delegation's profound and sincere condolences to the people of the United States in the aftermath of the monstrous tragedy that recently occurred in Las Vegas.

We express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his informative report (A/72/1). It is important that it focuses not only on the work of the Organization over the past year, but also on the tasks that it will face in the future. We share the document's key thought, namely, that the development of the international situation in the period under review was characterized by contradictory trends. In particular, the continuing transition to a multipolar world order has been accompanied by an increasing potential for conflicts, the growing threat of terrorism, deepening lines of division and powerful migration flows. A similar picture has been observed in the area of development. While progress has been made with a number of economic indicators, the problems of poverty and inequality are becoming more acute, the technology gap persists, climate change continues and unemployment among young people is on the rise.

Our global Organization has therefore been forced to take action under difficult conditions, constantly keeping its finger on the pulse of the evolving international situation and closely following and promptly responding to key changes. The Secretariat and the Secretary-General have provided essential support for Member States in that regard, and we thank them for their efforts.

We understand the need to adapt the United Nations to changing conditions and new realities. Its reform is an ongoing process. New institutions and structures are being established, the agenda is expanding and peacekeeping is becoming more multifaceted. At the same time, some assessments of what has happened in that regard and certain proposals with regard to ways to move the process forward that are presented in the report are not entirely clear. Let me focus on the following points.

On the subject of multipolarity, the report affirms that the United Nations is the best platform for uniting the efforts of Member States and civil society to solve current problems. We support the effort to make the Organization more transparent. However, we must emphasize that its work is traditionally of an intergovernmental nature, and it is Member States that have the prerogative to make decisions.

We believe that peacekeeping must not be considered in an overly broad manner or interpreted as some kind of new concept or direction in the work of the United Nations. Member States never have discussed, let alone agreed on, any action plan currently being put forward with regard to the broadly disseminated peacekeeping agenda. Identical resolutions adopted in 2016 by the General Assembly (70/262) and the Security Council (2282 (2016)) on the peacebuilding architecture proposed a unique definition of the term "sustaining peace". It is inextricably linked to the implementation of peacebuilding efforts and is the shared task and responsibility of both Governments and other stakeholders in national processes.

United Nations support for conflict prevention activities can be provided only in strict conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, the sovereignty of States and the leading role of the Security Council. The basic principles of international assistance in that regard are enshrined in Security Council resolution 2171 (2014). At the same time, the chief responsibility for preventing conflicts and for overcoming their consequences lies with the States themselves.

We believe that early prevention should not be based on some combination of certain conflict indicators, as that opens up opportunities for arbitrary or overly broad interpretations. There are no universal or automatic solutions to conflict prevention. Each situation requires a sensitive and impartial approach and a patient search for a unique solution. We must not forget that many conflicts have been triggered by foreign interference

in the internal affairs of States, including attempts to overthrow regimes that someone disliked.

Peace and security, human rights and development are unquestionably interrelated to some extent. However, it is important to have a clear understanding of the fact that development per se cannot guarantee peace and security, nor can peace and security guarantee sustainable development. Although they are related, each United Nations entity must retain its identity and functional specialization in order to avoid duplication of effort and interference in one another's areas of responsibility.

On economic issues, we cannot agree with the idea that the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council must serve as a framework for helping countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). One-dimensional interpretations of the climate-change process as a cause of mass migration also raise doubts and do not reflect existing differences in the positions of countries on that issue.

The report fails to mention the Economic and Social Council Forum on Financing for Development, which is the central platform for discussing development financing and how to achieve the SDGs. Instead, we are being asked to focus on strengthening the Development Cooperation Forum, which does not have a mandate to develop solutions in the field of financing.

The Russian delegation has traditionally been committed to the multifaceted topics of justice and the rule of law. However, the report presents those topics only as part of human rights. Furthermore, it states that when there is a lack of access to justice, certain segments of society may slip to violence. We consider that to be a one-sided and unreasonable approach. Other aspects of the rule of law, for example, the crucial international dimension, are not underscored at all. The same can be said of the section on drug control.

We are not convinced that the report should have paid so much attention to the International Criminal Court, a body that is outside the United Nations system. We also do not understand why an illegitimate mechanism to investigate crimes in Syria is presented as an unprecedented step. The General Assembly established the mechanism in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and exceeded its own authority in doing so. Once again, we call on the Secretary-General and Member States to renounce all forms of support for that mechanism.

Once again, we express our principled support for the Secretary-General's wish to improve the United Nations. However, given the sensitive nature of any changes in that regard, we are convinced that there is a need for clear and rational reform plans and that they should be strictly coordinated with all Member States. In that way, the call to strengthen multilateralism in international politics and to increase the authority of the Organization can be made a reality.

Mr. Akbaruddin (India): The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/72/1) is in many ways an inflection point. It depicts the international landscape and the United Nations itself in a manner that looks much different compared to just a year ago.

The euphoria surrounding the finalization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change seems to have substantially dissipated, even though large-scale efforts are under way in many States to achieve the objectives outlined in those goals. The resentment produced by the uneven impacts of globalization within and among national economies, the anxiety generated by large movements of peoples fleeing extreme levels of armed conflict and brutality across continents and the widespread devastation at the hands of nature's fury, which signal the urgency of climate action, are all depicted with startling starkness. Threats of nuclear escalation, armed conflict, massive refugee flows, ever escalating terrorist attacks, endemic poverty and underdevelopment, worsening environmental degradation and climate change, accelerating technological change, all have increased rather than diminished the demand for much closer and more effective multilateralism.

Yet the spirit of global partnership appears muted at best. While we have created a community of mutual dependence, we have yet to create one of mutual trust and respect. Multilateralism itself would seem to be in retreat. The world is clearly in a state of flux.

The first report of Secretary-General António Guterres on the work of the Organization brings out succinctly some of the global challenges we face. It points to many of the weaknesses in the United Nations system and makes a compelling case for reform.

Over the past several weeks, the Secretary-General has also elaborated some of his reform proposals for the United Nations system. We have conveyed our support

for the Secretary-General's overall efforts to work for reform. We appreciate the initiative to establish an Office of Counter-Terrorism so as to consolidate the United Nations efforts on that significant problem. We welcome the push towards a greater gender balance in senior appointments. The initiatives to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse are innovative. The efforts to deal with the fundamental fragmentation in the way that work is organized at the United Nations will improve delivery. Aligning authority with responsibility and the delegation of authority to managers at the field level, while changing organizational designs to strengthen accountability, are proposals that are all overdue. We appreciate the spirit that imbues those objectives, as well as the Secretary-General's willingness to change processes. We will address those specific issues as they are unveiled in greater detail. From a policy perspective, however, we need to assess whether the breadth of suggestions for reform matches the depth of the challenges we are facing.

Human history is, in part, also the story of our adaptation to new technologies. Today, the gap between what technological advances permit and what the current system of multilateral cooperation is prepared to address is growing in many areas. Technical achievements, which we believed to be capable of solving all our ills, are actually accentuating our sense of insecurity. Will the reform being talked about facilitate efforts to address that dichotomy? Can we, in all honesty, say that the reforms that we are contemplating will make us fit for purpose to address the challenges posed by the furious pace of technological advances in artificial intelligence, synthetic biology, geoengineering, directed-energy systems and additive manufacturing? Can we say that we are getting prepared through the current set of reform efforts to address issues of global commons or spaces that no State controls, but on which all States rely for security and prosperity? As the commons — our oceans and outer space — get congested and contested, will the contemplated reforms address the challenges that those spaces will pose? For example, are we able to assess the concerns for "we the people" resulting from the more than 22,000 man-made objects orbiting the Earth? Cyberspace is just one more example of the frontier areas where we remain out of our depth in multilateral terms.

Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Speaking very evocatively at the opening of the high-level week, the Secretary-General said that rather than a world at peace, we have a world in pieces. The aging pillars of a creaking and crumbling post-Second World War order are not amenable to improvement by minor stabs at modest reform at the margins. If we are not to remain prisoners of historical destiny for all time, and if we are to keep pace with the fast-moving threats we face, we will have to go beyond piecemeal changes. If not, we will be condemned to global governance in pieces too.

If we await dramatic crises to force our hand to get us to address such issues, we do so at the cost of deepening the crisis of relevance and performance of the United Nations in particular, as well as the legitimacy and effectiveness of multilateralism in general. If we choose to collectively address those issues as part of a quest to strive proactively for peace, justice and order, it will represent a necessary step in piecing together a system that is increasingly seen to be in pieces.

India, for its part, stands ready to work with the Secretary-General and the membership in finding a pathway to a more lasting peace and prosperity for all.

Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan): Let me start by conveying Pakistan's gratitude to the Secretary-General for his annual report on the work of the Organization (A/72/1). We agree with the Secretary-General's assessment that the international situation is marked by conflicting trends. While the international community has made important progress in its fight against extreme poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease, the dividends resulting from those gains have been unequally distributed. Inequality, exclusion and a lack of opportunity continue to blight the hopes and aspirations of millions of people, especially women and girls.

As advancements in communication and commerce have made the world more interconnected and interdependent, there are powerful voices of discontent casting doubt on the very foundations of the liberal economic international order. At the same time, changing climatic patterns have unleashed nature's fury in unforeseen and unprecedented ways.

Internal conflicts and violence continue to undermine the prospects for peace and stability across many parts of the world. Protracted conflicts have also spawned unprecedented humanitarian crises, if not emergencies. Already displaced by the ravages of war, countless millions of people, including children, have

been forced to wage fresh battles for survival against famine and disease. Meanwhile terrorism, which has mutated into new and more dangerous forms, has yet to be defeated.

At a time when international cooperation is needed most to address those interrelated and mutually reinforcing challenges, the world is, sadly, more divided and polarized. As the Secretary-General urges in his report, we must revive faith in multilateralism so as to face the most pressing, indeed shared, challenges of our times. The United Nations remains indispensable to our efforts to restore order and ensure global peace, stability and prosperity.

Just as the world has evolved over the past 70 years, so must the United Nations, so that it is fit for purpose. Today, more than ever, we need the United Nations to provide the parameters, processes and platforms for global cooperation that are essential to addressing our wide-ranging challenges to peace, security and development. We welcome the efforts launched by Secretary-General António Guterres to revitalize the United Nations capabilities for peace and security, development and management.

By the same token, the Security Council cannot remain isolated from the process of change. A comprehensive reform of the Security Council is therefore essential, but as Pakistan's Prime Minister told the Assembly last month, the process should transform

> "the Security Council into a more representative, democratic and accountable organ, rather than an expanded club of the powerful and the privileged." (*A/72/PV.14, p. 8*)

We consider the Secretary-General's emphasis on prevention both apt and timely. A surge in diplomacy is the best response to any threat to peace. Over the years, peacekeeping has remained the United Nations flagship enterprise for conflict prevention, mediation and sustaining peace.

Among the world's top troop-contributing countries, Pakistan is proud to have played its part in bringing hope to the lives of millions of people caught up in conflict and war across the world. This year alone, five Pakistani peacekeepers made the ultimate sacrifice to uphold international peace and security. Our peacekeepers have always displayed the highest standards of professionalism and conduct. Pakistan was also among the first batch of countries to sign the United Nations voluntary compact on preventing and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse.

Respect for human rights is at the core of the Secretary-General's call for prevention and sustaining peace. But peace can only be built on a foundation of justice. There can be no peace without justice. Yet, these universal ideals are being violated, in plain sight of the international community, in Palestine, in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere.

The continuing Indian occupation of Jammu and Kashmir is a travesty of justice, law and morality. That dispute has been on the agenda of the United Nations and the Security Council for almost 70 years. But the people of Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir still await the implementation of numerous Security Council resolutions that promised them their inalienable right to self-determination.

The Kashmiri people, men, women and children, have waged a heroic and popular struggle against occupation. India has used brutal and indiscriminate force to suppress the indigenous freedom movement. Hundreds of innocent, unarmed Kashmiris have been martyred in the recent wave of protests; countless others have been blinded and maimed by pellet guns in what has been widely and rightly described as the first mass blinding in human history.

Indian atrocities in Jammu and Kashmir have been well documented by international human rights organizations. India does not deny those actions. It defends them. It does not express remorse for the acts of the perpetrators of those war crimes. It rewards them with national honours. To cover up its crimes against the Kashmiri people and to divert world attention, India resorts to daily violations of the ceasefire along the Line of Control in Kashmir. It claims, falsely, to have conducted a surgical strike across the Line of Control. That claim, and India's repeated threats to conduct such strikes across the Line of Control, constitutes a flagrant violation of the injunction against the use or threat of use of force enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. That gives my country sufficient reason to respond in exercise of its right to self-defence. By making such false claims and blatant threats, India's leaders seem to be attempting to provoke a conflict with Pakistan. All I can say to them is that they should not underestimate Pakistan's resolve and capacity to defend itself. Any aggression or intervention will meet a matching and

effective response from our armed forces and from the people of Pakistan.

Nor should the United Nations ignore India's open threats to use force. The international community should take urgent action to persuade India to halt its provocations against my country. The nations of the world represented here must not tolerate India's impunity in committing its crimes against humanity in Kashmir under the flimsy cover of a response to terrorism. The only terrorism in Kashmir is State terrorism by India. The brutalization of peoples kept under foreign occupation is, in fact, considered as the gravest form of terrorism by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, which includes almost two thirds of the General Assembly's membership.

Pakistan has been on the front lines in the fight against terrorism. Our military campaigns, involving 200,000 of our troops, have crushed and eliminated terrorist groups in our frontier regions and our towns and cities. We have paid a heavy price — 27,000 civilians and military personnel have been martyred, making the ultimate sacrifice, and many more have been injured and maimed for life, but that does not deter us. We will continue until we have eliminated the last terrorist from our soil.

But as we all know, terrorism is now a global phenomenon that must be addressed comprehensively in all its forms, including State terrorism. The global threat of terrorism cannot, however, be defeated unless we address its underlying causes. Poverty and ignorance are part of the problem, as are social and political exclusion, foreign intervention and the denial of economic and political justice. Similarly, extremist ideologies must also be challenged and countered.

Finally, in conclusion, I would like to quote Dag Hammarskjöld, who famously said that the United Nations "was not created to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell." In the midst of the profound and imposing challenges confronting us today, the United Nations remains our best hope to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Pakistan's commitment to our parliament of man is firm and abiding, and we will work collectively, collaboratively and together for a better and brighter future, for all of humankind.

Mr. Rattray (Jamaica): The Secretary General's report on the work of the Organization (A/72/1) represents a tale of mixed fortunes. It recalls the significant strides that we have made in several areas and across various regions. We welcome the fact that millions of people have been lifted out of poverty, more children are achieving greater levels of education and more women are entering politics. Sadly, those encouraging signs have been met with very disheartening developments that place our achievements at risk.

The report points, quite worryingly, to the disturbing trends in the increasing numbers of terrorist attacks, greater inequality and marginalization, and growing humanitarian crises. It provides a list of various challenges that affect us as an international community and threaten our commitment to leaving no one behind. We therefore agree with the Secretary-General in his assessment that the Organization has to be more productive, proactive, dynamic and nimble in its approach to many of those issues.

My delegation is especially pleased that the report acknowledges the particular challenges that beset middle-income countries. The recognition that large numbers of people struggling with poverty live in middle-income countries reinforces our long-standing contention that per-capita income as a percentage of gross domestic product does not reflect the full picture of the development status of middle-income countries. The sense of exclusion of which the Secretary-General speaks is real and threatens prospects for citizens to live productive and decent lives.

The Secretary-General makes a timely and relevant assertion that the United Nations advocacy for disarmament is more vital than ever. Multilateral action on all disarmament and non-proliferation fronts remains central to our common endeavour. That is vividly demonstrated by the startling reality, highlighted by the Secretary-General, that conventional arms remain the predominant means of killing and destruction. The report's consideration of the effects of crime on development is instructive.

As a country challenged by high levels of crime and violence, we welcome the ongoing efforts of the United Nations to support national and regional programmes aimed at stemming that scourge. Given the symbiotic relationship of crime, violence and drugs, we accord great importance to the Organization's continued work in that field. Jamaica remains particularly keen on exploring the follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, which was held in 2016.

We join in celebrating the historic adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and share the concerns about the additional challenges of cybersecurity, artificial intelligence and the potential harmful use of outer space, which the Secretary-General also highlights in his report.

As witnessed throughout the year and most pointedly during the recent passage of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, extreme weather phenomena and climate change present real and serious challenges for each and every one of us. The devastating impact of natural disasters on human life and property is undeniable. The Secretary-General's strong signal of his commitment to responding to those challenges is therefore welcome. So too is the work being undertaken by Member States to draw up an international legally binding instrument in the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to conserve and sustainably use marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

We support the focus of the Secretary-General on the elimination of all forms of violence against women and children. We endorse the stance that he has taken that the United Nations must continue its efforts to that end. We also support the focus on the promotion and protection of human rights as integral to efforts aimed at preventing conflict and at sustaining peace. We underscore that such efforts should also take into account all economic, social and cultural rights in the consideration of peace as a human rights imperative.

The joint United Nations-World Bank flagship study on the manner in which development and political processes interact to prevent violence should provide some useful insights into some aspects of that dynamic. However, funding will no doubt remain critical. The empowerment of vulnerable groups will remain an essential aspect of the United Nations work. My delegation is pleased that that has been highlighted in the report and is supportive of that approach.

We read with interest the Secretary-General's reference to the important role that partnerships can play in advancing the work of the Organization. However, we would have welcomed a specific reference to the Caribbean Community in that context, as our subregion is committed to strengthening its cooperation with the United Nations.

In the specific case of Haiti, we are pleased with the efforts being made to respond to the cholera outbreak in that country and welcome the acknowledgement of the role that the United Nations has to play in effectively addressing the crisis. We urge all Member States in a position to do so to contribute to the United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund that has been established to assist Haitians affected by the epidemic.

I conclude by reiterating my delegation's commitment to the Organization and our shared vision of a United Nations that is responsive to the needs of its constituents.

Mr. Khoshroo (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to touch briefly on some of the issues reflected in the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization (A/72/1) that we find noteworthy. As the world is witnessing a plethora of complex and interconnected challenges, we join the Secretary-General in his assessment in paragraph 4 of the report that

> "now more than ever, multilateral action is needed to find effective solutions to this mix of challenges".

We also share his concern in paragraph 140 of the report that

> "multilateralism is being questioned at a time when we most need coherent global responses to these interconnected events".

In a very pertinent case, we would like to reiterate that the Iran nuclear deal, as a testament to the value of diplomacy, should be protected from any attempt to modify it, as that will undermine not only the agreement, but also diplomacy and multilateralism in general. In that context, we renew our call to the Secretariat to take a more constructive approach to fulfilling its reporting function.

On preserving international peace and security, the report rightly points out that the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was a step towards the universally desired goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. In our view, it also represented a collective protest against the almost 50-year violation of nuclear disarmament obligations by the nuclear-weapon States. In that context, we also expect it to include the alarming trends of the new nuclear arms race and nuclear-arms modernization race, as well as the strong international call that has been made for putting an immediate end to such races.

On the issue of peacekeeping operations, Iran believes that such operations are the strongest and

most effective tools for maintaining global peace and security, as well as for containing conflicts. However, as recommended by the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations in its report (see A/70/95), Iran believes that United Nation peacekeeping missions should not engage in military counter-terrorism operations, which should be done by host Governments.

The establishment of the Office of Counter-Terrorism to lead the counter-terrorism-related activities across the United Nations system has the potential to enhance United Nations capacity, strengthen coherence and coordination, and improve internal and external communication. It could also strengthen the United Nations capacity to address the root causes of terrorism and violent extremism. It is imperative to allocate sufficient financial resources for the Office from the United Nations regular budget. We note with concern that in the new structure, most of the positions will be funded through voluntary funds. Moreover, there should be sufficient and sustainable funding available from the regular budget for capacity-building to meet the needs of Member States upon request, and such funding should be made available in an impartial, balanced and sustainable manner.

As for the ongoing United Nations reform consultation process on development, it is essential to bear in mind the significance of the alignment and compatibility of the United Nations development system with the policies, priorities and needs of developing countries, with an emphasis on national ownership and leadership at the country level.

In that context, we would like to recall the scope and mandate of the operational activities for the development of the United Nations system envisioned in resolution 71/243. Our region is now grappling with numerous human, environmental and social challenges. Achieving peace and sustainable development in tandem has become the Middle East's most urgent priority. In that regard, the United Nations reform process should help the countries of our region to meet their special needs and challenges. It is also important that the United Nations regain its leading role in shaping world public opinion, rather than following biased media trends or the agenda of donor countries.

By way of conclusion, my delegation takes note of the Secretary-General's efforts regarding the reform of the management of the Organization. I would like to emphasize that any reform effort must strengthen the ability of Member States to perform their oversight and monitoring roles, as well as preserve the intergovernmental, multilateral and international nature of the Organization. We will carefully examine the Secretary-General's reform proposal and actively participate in the consultations on that issue. The world today faces exponentially greater risks, but we also have greater opportunities. Let us join hands to confront the risks, while appreciating the new opportunities for a better and brighter future.

Mr. Sadykov (Kazakhstan): At the outset, we express our deepest condolences to the United States for the loss of innocent lives in the massacre that took place last weekend, and we wish the injured a speedy recovery.

We thank Secretary-General Guterres for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization (A/72/1), which demonstrates that the United Nations is the only global, multilateral platform that can address global issues, threats and chalienges. We highly commend his courage and commitment to improving the work of the Organization and taking it into the twenty-first century. His forward-looking, yet pragmatic vision and leadership will bring the international community together as we support his thrust to counter global risks by promoting both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the sustaining peace agenda, the two key trajectories of the United Nations.

Kazakhstan fully endorses and will work with others on the Secretary-General's plan for bold and much-needed system-wide reforms in areas ranging from management and gender parity to human resources, in order to improve the coordination of the United Nations development system. We will be actively engaged with others in efforts to achieve enhanced accountability and transparency and to pool our resources to make the United Nations more cost-effective and result-oriented.

The Secretary-General's approach and focus on prevention, using the tool of preventive diplomacy, is also one of the core principles of my country's foreign policy. It was in 1992, soon after we became independent, that the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, convened the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), an intergovernmental forum to promote peace, security and stability in Asia and beyond. We will work towards a greater synergy between the United Nations and the CICA.

As the country representing Central Asia on the Security Council for the first time in the history of the United Nations, we will support the United Nations and the Secretary-General's efforts by promoting security and stability in the region, by fully implementing the mandate of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, which is celebrating its tenth anniversary.

Compliance with international law is the bedrock of national, regional and global peace and security. Upholding the principles of the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of States will thereby prevent humankind from repeating the tragic mistakes of the past. We therefore underscore the crucial need to reaffirm the principles of international law.

We welcome the Secretary-General's initiatives to reform United Nations peacekeeping and the restructuring of its mechanisms at Headquarters and in the field, with a view to strengthening the Organization's ability to prevent and counter asymmetrical conflicts. We agree that clear mandates with achievable goals and the use of regional forces will bring about greater relevance, effectiveness and accountability. Engaging new contributing countries would reduce the deployment gap for rapid-reaction emergency responses. We support the Secretary-General's concept of sustaining peace by using all tools in an integrated manner and in parallel. Kazakhstan is committed to supporting the United Nations by enlarging its contribution to United Nations peacekeeping missions.

The Secretary-General has spoken of the need to fight terrorism and violent extremism. In June, therefore, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Central Asian States had the opportunity to work with the Secretary-General in Ashgabat, when he participated in the High-level Dialogue on Implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia. Kazakhstan will work closely with the newly established United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism to fight international terrorism through a long-term comprehensive approach. We are therefore proposing the adoption of a code of conduct for the achievement of a terrorism-free world, which will positively strengthen regional and global cooperation in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

Kazakhstan is fully engaged in fighting the nuclear threat, one of the most urgent tasks of our time. The current year has witnessed important developments, such as the historic adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which hopefully will lead to a total ban on nuclear weapons. Kazakhstan actively participated in that process and will sign the Treaty on the completion of its internal procedures. We also inaugurated the International Atomic Energy Agency's low-enriched uranium nuclear bank to facilitate the development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the strengthening the regime for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Kazakhstan shares the view of the Secretary-General that the United Nations now faces the additional challenges of cybersecurity, artificial intelligence and the potentially harmful use of outer space. We believe that the international community should take appropriate and coordinated measures to cope with those new challenges.

Kazakhstan is deeply committed to all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, promoting justice and equality for all and countering climate change. Despite our abundant conventional energy resources, we are deeply committed to a diversified, green economy with alternative energy sources. That sort of thinking led us to choose "Future Energy" as the theme for the Astana Expo 2017, which opened on 10 June and concluded on 10 September. Some 122 countries and 18 international organizations, including the United Nations system, showcased their best solutions for gernerating renewable sources of energy and combating climate change.

Our commitment to the objectives of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is reflected in the strategic national legislation and programmes that our Government has adopted, as well as our partnership with all countries, especially the most vulnerable, which include the least developed, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. My country will therefore focus on enabling all countries in such special situations to reach their own vision. Our consistent approach to solving problems is threefold, consisting of strengthening the security-development nexus, taking a more regional approach rather than a narrow country focu, and establishing a well-coordinated development strategy based on the United Nations system, best described as "One United Nations", with the full engagement of women and young people and aimed at 50-50 representation. Notwithstanding the challenges, by working with the Secretary-General, the United Nations, Member States

and others, we will see a better future for people and the planet.

Ms. Hailu (Ethiopia): I would like to start my brief remarks by applauding the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization (A/72/1). It is indeed comprehensive and covers all aspects of the work of the Organization. It does that succinctly and is therefore very helpful for framing exchanges of views among Member States at a time when the role of the United Nations has perhaps become more critical than ever.

Let me say that we agree with the thrust of the narrative that underlines the report. Though the world has seen significant progress in reducing poverty, expanding health and education and improving gender equality, the current global context presents new risks for our hard-won collective progress, as the report rightly acknowledges. Poverty, inequality, economic fragility, unemployment, conflict, the adverse impacts of climate change, governance shortcomings and illegal migration are among the challenges that threaten our agenda, which seeks to create a world free from want and fear. Hence, two years after adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with much optimism, we cannot deny that that optimism has dissipated. We have to recreate that optimism, because there is no alternative. It is therefore crucial to find effective and durable solutions to the multiple common challenges we face, while maximizing the benefits of globalization for all. That is how we will realize the vision of leaving no one behind.

The multifaceted and transnational challenges require transboundary actions, since no single country, no matter how powerful, can solve our global problems alone. Although the world has transformative and comprehensive development frameworks, what is required is political determination and commitment to acting collectively through renewed faith in a more effective multilateralism and revitalized global partnership and solidarity. In that regard, the commitments of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, as well as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, should be translated into action aimed at eradicating all forms of poverty, mobilizing sufficient financial and technological resources and combating the negative effects of climate change.

Furthermore, the United Nations should be fit for purpose, so that it can support developing countries, particularly the most vulnerable countries, in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals in line with their national priorities. In that respect, we support the reform agenda of the Secretary-General. Without underestimating the specific challenges that each country faces, it is important to provide special attention to the most vulnerable countries, in particular the least developed countries. Meaningful priority should therefore be given to countries in special situations, with the aim of implementing the global development frameworks and undertaking the United Nations reforms. In that regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's efforts to further strengthen United Nations peace and development efforts in Africa. We support the recent agreement reached between the United Nations and the African Union, and we look forward to the Secretary-General's report on financing African-led peace support missions this coming November.

Achieving inclusive and sustainable development, as well as building a participatory democratic system, has been the overriding policy objective of the Ethiopian Government. By implementing integrated development strategies through a participatory and decentralized federal approach, Ethiopia has been able to meet most of the Millennium Development Goals. Moreover, we have continued to register encouraging results in executing our current national development plan, the Growth and Transformation Plan 2015-2020, which integrates the Sustainable Development Goals. In implementing our Plan, along with reducing poverty through rapid and inclusive economic growth, we are devoting special attention to structural economic transformation and building a green and climate-resilient economy.

We have made people-centred progress by reducing poverty, enhancing the well-being of our people and increasing the resilience and the productive capacity of our economy. However, poverty, unemployment, deficits in good governance, inadequate development funding and the adverse consequences of climate change are among the challenges that we continue to face. By taking lessons from our successes and our shortcomings, we seek to intensify our efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, in accordance with our specific national conditions. No matter what we may have achieved, we are fully aware that without renewed international cooperation, we are unlikely to fully prevail over poverty. That is why we believe in multilateralism, and promoting that objective

is also in our national interest. We believe that applies to all countries.

Let me conclude by reaffirming that the United Nations system in general, including the General Assembly, has an important role to play in advancing and advocating for the full and timely implementation of the 2030 Agenda. We believe, as the report of the Secretary General underscores, that it is through a coherent and coordinated approach that fully embraces the three pillars of development that we can realize people-centred peace and prosperity for all.

Mr. Awad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation has taken note of the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization (A/72/1), and I would like to comment briefly on some of the issues that were mentioned in the report.

We welcome the report's discussion of the challenges that the United Nations is facing, such as the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, climate change, equality, transparency, United Nations reform, multilateralism and the culture of early prevention. We also affirm the role of Member States in all of the above, bearing in mind that the United Nations is an intergovernmental organization and that Member States are the decision-makers in this body. My delegation welcomes the mention in the report of the establishment of the Office of Counter-Terrorism, because it should enhance advocacy efforts and the mobilization of resources to expand the scope of efforts aimed at enhancing initiatives to prevent conflict and dealing with root causes leading to the recruitment of terrorists. We would like to note that we have previously expressed our reservations about the financing of the Office by one country — a country that is known for financing terrorism — instead of from the regular budget of the United Nations. My country's experience in combating armed terrorist groups that are supported and funded by certain countries is well known to all and deserved specific mention in the Secretary-General's report, which, unfortunately, did not happen.

Secondly, the Secretary-General's report made no mention of the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan and other Arab territories that have been occupied since 1967, or of all the resolutions that have called for an end to the worst occupation ever known to humankind.

Thirdly, the report does not mention the unilateral group of measures that have been imposed on several countries, including Syria, by the United States of America, the European Union and other States in a manner that is not in line with international law or the Charter of the United Nations.

My delegation strongly rejects a statement in paragraph 115 of the Secretary-General's report, which says

> "In an unprecedented step, the General Assembly established the International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011."

As is well known, my delegation rejects that Mechanism, which was established by an illegitimate, non-consensual resolution (71/248), full of political and legal holes. The resolution was submitted by countries that are well known for their anti-Syrian agendas. Moreover, the Mechanism's establishment represents blatant interference in the internal affairs of my country in a manner that is not in line with the principles and purposes of the Charter or with international law.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization contained in document A/72/1?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to speakers in exercise of the right of reply, I would like to remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Gambhir (India): I am taking the floor to respond to the remarks made by the Permanent Representative of Pakistan in the debate earlier today.

Even as we heard speakers address concerns of the present and the future, we also heard a lonely voice from the wilderness articulate a narrative of the past. That voice focused on an issue that has not even been deliberated on in the United Nations for decades and that Pakistan tries to keep alive via procedural stratagems even as the world has moved on. Yesterday's people, reflecting antiquated mindsets of bygone times,

are symbolic of what holds us all back. My delegation does not wish to waste the Assembly's precious time by engaging further in such distractions.

Mr. Warraich (Pakistan): My delegation is compelled to take the floor in exercise of the right of reply to the statement just made by the representative of India. Despite what some may believe, the repetition of groundless accusations and fabrications does not lend them credibility. They may at best satisfy a self-delusional notion of reality. But a farce can only go so far. Let me recall for the benefit of the Indian representative that Jammu and Kashmir is not a part of India. It never was and never will be. It has been recognized by the United Nations and the international community as disputed territory. The Indian occupation of Jammu and Kashmir is therefore illegal. No amount of obfuscation, diversion, deceit and aggression can hide that fact.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 110?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Before concluding, I wish to make an announcement concerning the membership of the General Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. Members will recall that for the seventy-second session, the President, the 21 Vice-Presidents and the Chairs of the six Main Committees were elected on 31 May 2017. Subsequently, I would like to inform members that on 28 September, His Excellency Mr. Mohammed Hussein Bahr Aluloom of Iraq was elected Chair of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session in order to replace His Excellency Mr. Mouayed Saleh, and is accordingly a member of the General Committee for the session. I congratulate the Chair of the First Committee on his election.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.